

**THE HONORABLE MICHAEL GRIFFIN
NASA ADMINISTRATOR
STATE OF SMALL BUSINESS AT NASA ADDRESS
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Good afternoon, ladies and gentleman and welcome to today's awardees and their families. Congratulations on your achievements.

I also want to welcome all of the entrepreneurs out there in the audience, those who currently have contracts with NASA, those that have subcontracts with major corporations doing business with NASA, and those of you daring enough to seek future work with the agency.

I have a great deal of admiration for entrepreneurs, people who take risks and start businesses. Before beginning my second life at NASA, I used to run a company myself. And just before coming here, I headed a division of a major university that sought and performed contracts with NASA. So I am very familiar with the entrepreneurial contributors to our space mission. I know how hard it is to succeed at what you do, and also how satisfying it is to come forward with new ideas and make them work through a lot of hard effort and perseverance.

We intend to rely on you heavily as we execute the Vision for Space Exploration, our long term strategy to explore the solar system and settle new territory when it becomes possible to do so.

My attitude in this regard is quite simple. As I said a few months ago in a talk to Women in Aerospace, I'm really not that concerned with what package people come in, as I'm most interested in what's in their brains. NASA needs *all* the diverse, invaluable human mind power that our country has to offer.

Those who know me well know that when analyzing an issue, I like to respond to hard facts. And I am heartened that the number of prime and subcontract awards for businesses such as yours has risen from six percent to 19.4 percent in the past 15 years. This is a recognition more than anything of the skills, capabilities and high standards of excellence you bring to the table.

I pledge to you that the effort that got us to this point in providing fair opportunities for small, minority, women and service disabled veterans-owned businesses to compete fairly for work at the agency will continue under my leadership.

We can't make you successful, but we will create an environment in which people like you can dream big dreams and contribute tangibly to the achievement of our mission objectives.

Last month NASA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization highlighted some of our procurement opportunities at a Small Business Solutions Conference in New York City. And it is a strong indication of how important we view this function that four of the seven crew members of the recent Space Shuttle Discovery mission, including Commander Eileen Collins, were there to kick it off.

Section on Specific Contractors

No doubt the crew members appreciated the work of a number of our small business contractors on NASA's return to flight effort. A woman-owned business, Hernandez Engineering in Houston, for example, conducted work to allow the Shuttle Remote Manipulator System to more accurately track a desired trajectory and added safety features that will stop motion of the Shuttle Remote Manipulator System should a failure occur.

A small disadvantaged business based in Mountain View, California, Aerospace Computing Inc. assisted NASA's effort in the development of an experimental heating database to determine Shuttle orbiter tile damage thresholds that could trigger corrective action such as on-orbit repair of thermal protection system tiles.

And Sierra Lobo in Fremont, Ohio tested at its Aerodynamic Heating Facility several candidate materials for the Shuttle External Tank foam.

Concluding Remarks

I'm convinced that the programs and initiatives that we currently have in place at NASA have and will continue to result not only in impressive small business performance numbers, but also high quality, low cost and safety conscious goods and services. We sincerely appreciate all that you do for America's space program. Once again, congratulations to our award recipients, and I'll now turn the program back over to Ralph Thomas.

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